

Media, PA— Through his efforts as Vice Chairman of the Small Business Committee and by giving local companies better access to resources, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) has worked to enhance the small business climate in Delaware County. Today the Congressman announced one significant achievement in this process as he presented Delaware County Community College with a \$282,000 check for its Small Business Solution Center, funding that he advocated for and won through the federal appropriations process. These resources will allow the college to enhance its programs that assist aspiring and existing small business owners with a wide range of activities including marketing, planning, and financing. — “Small businesses are responsible for more than 70 percent of job creation across the country,” said Congressman Sestak, who presented a check to College President Dr. Jerry Parker. “Enhancing our local economy requires that we reverse the trend that has seen Delaware County alone experience a net loss of more than 700 small businesses between 2001 and 2006. I am taken by Delaware County Community College’s efforts to vitalize our region by supporting the next generation of entrepreneurs and I look forward to continuing to partner with the school.”

This funding is also a vital part of Congressman Sestak’s workforce development efforts in the District as he has emphasized that businesses and educators must take a proactive approach to ensuring that the next generation of workers is prepared for the jobs available to them. With the resources presented by the Congressman, the college will, among other projects, develop a series of entrepreneurial programs for students pursuing trade careers, such as automotive technology, carpentry and welding.

The college’s plans complement an initiative Congressman Sestak has started at the secondary school level. Last week, the Congressman Sestak brought together representatives of school districts, institutions of higher education, and local businesses for a new project that will emphasize artisan-skill training. This initiative will partner businesses with school districts to introduce students to high-value manufacturing fields and establish a relationship between the businesses and the community.

“A critical facet of a healthy economy is a strong, versatile workforce that is prepared for careers in this era of extraordinary technological advancements,” said Congressman Sestak. “One area where many quality jobs exist is in manufacturing fields, such as welding, which require more advanced artisan skills and a greater proficiency in math than they used to. Many local business leaders have told me that they cannot find enough qualified employees for these careers.”

The new initiative has grown out of a Workforce Development Summit and a Higher Education and Workforce Development Advisory Committee, which has discussed the topics that were raised at the summit. That event brought together administrators of vocational and technical

schools, as well as those schools that have vo-tech curriculum, and with the goal of teaming them up with businesses in our region for a two-fold purpose. The first was to stress the value of teaching our students the skills that businesses are in need of and are actively seeking out. Second was to encourage businesses to have a mentoring roll in the lives of students who will one day make up our workforce.

Another main objective of the Congressman's work on behalf of small businesses has been to provide access to resources for small businesses in the region. December's Business Procurement attracted more than 400 small businessmen and women, bringing them together with more than 40 large businesses and more than 15 federal and state government contractors to increase opportunities for small businesses, which receive only 6.7 percent of federal contracts in the District, as opposed to the federally mandated 23 percent.

The Congressman has also strongly supported legislation in Washington to improve the economic climate in the nation, and specifically in the District:

- Originated amendments requiring the Department of Defense – prior to awarding contracts worth more than \$5 million – to conduct market research on the ability of small businesses to do the work; and stopping the government from unfairly “bundling” small contracts into “mega-contracts,” a practice that makes it harder for small business to compete.
- The Small Business Investment Expansion Act to reform the Small Business Administration to help struggling businesses obtain the capital necessary to start or grow their operations. It also improves access to venture capital and “angel investments,” to spur innovation and ensure our nation's global competitiveness.
- The Small Business Regulatory Improvement Act to require rules affecting small business to take into account any direct or indirect effects on those businesses before the rule goes into effect.
- The SBA Entrepreneurial Development Programs Act, supporting and expanding small business development center programs.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.